DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 318 537 JC 900 272

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TITLE Students' Preferences in Types of Classroom Instruction and the Compatibility between Teaching/Learning Styles.
INSTITUTION John Abbott Coll., Sainte Anne de Bellevue (Quebec).
PUB DATE Apr 88
NOTE 9p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Cognitive Style; College Faculty; Community Colleges; Discussion (Teaching Technique); Foreign Countries; Instructional Films; Lecture Method; Psychology; *Student Attitudes; Student Reaction; Teacher Attitudes; *Teaching Methods; Two Year Colleges; Two Year College Students

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted at John Abbott College to determine the preferences of psychology students among five styles of classroom instruction: films, group discussions, lectures, teacher-led questions and answers, or videos. Questionnaires were distributed in four psychology teachers' upper-level courses, lower-level courses, and continuing education courses. Usable data were obtained from two teachers and 585 students. Teachers were asked to anticipate the students' responses as to preferences of the teaching styles. Films were ranked as first preference by 31% of the students, videos second (31%), group discussions third (31%), teacher-led questions and answers fourth (34%), and lectures fifth (31%). Student rankings coincided with the teachers' predictions. Due to limited teacher participation, not enough data were collected to draw conclusions about preferred learning styles or teacher awareness of these preferred styles. (WJT)

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STUDENTS' PREFERENCES IN TYPES OF CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION AND THE COMPATIBILITY BETWEEN TEACHING/LEARNING STYLES

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April 1988

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Depot legal - 1er trimestre 1990
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ABSTRACT OF

FINAL RESEARCH REPORT

JOHN ABBOTT COLLEGE

TITLE: A STUDY OF STUDENTS' PREFERENCES IN TYPES OF CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION AND THE COMPATIBILITY BETWEEN TEACHING/LEARNING STYLES

PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR: GAIL PFLASTER, Ed. D.

FUNDING SOURCE: R and D Internal

DATE COMPLETED: April 1988

MEDIUM:

Print	[X]	LANGUAGE: English	[X]
Audio-visual	[ ]	French	[ ]
Computer Software	[ ]	Other _____	[ ]
Other: _____	[ ]		

LENGTH OF ITEM: 6 Pages

MAJOR SUBJECT AREA COVERED: TEACHING METHODOLOGY

ABSTRACT:

A survey was conducted to determine the preferences of psychology students among five styles of classroom instruction. Students were asked to rank the following styles in order of preference on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 was high and five was low: films, group discussions, lectures, teacher led questions and answers, and videos. Their instrutors were asked to anticipate what the students' preferences would be.

It was found that students ranked the teaching styles in the following order: films, videos, group discussions, teacher led questions and answers, and lectures. These rankings coincided with the predictions of their instructors.

These findings were considered to be inconclusive because they appeared to reflect the teaching styles of the few instructors who chose to participate in the study.

Recommendations were made for further research following teacher orientation and including additional teaching strategies.

AVAILABILITY: In Library [X] Reference #_____
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AA018W88.R&D

A. STATEMENT OF THE PURPOSE OR PROBLEM

Teaching styles and learning styles vary according to individual preferences based upon previous experiences.

This study was designed to:

1. Determine student preferences among five styles of classroom instruction in psychology courses.

2. Determine the expectations of psychology instructors about the preferences of their students.

3. Compare the students preferences with the teachers' expectations.

4. Make recommendations to increase compatibility between teaching styles and preferred learning styles.

It is anticipated that if student preferences exist and if these preferences are known, teaching styles might be adapted to match student's preferred learning styles.

HYPOTHESES:

1. Students have preferences among styles of teaching.

2. Students prefer teaching styles involving use of film or video to those involving straight lecture.

3. Teachers are not aware of student's preferences.

B. STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

1. To determine whether or not some styles of classroom instruction are preferred to other styles by psychology students in their psychology courses.

2. To measure the rank order of student preferences among five styles of classroom instruction.

3. To determine which styles of classroom instruction students prefer.

4. To determine whether or not psychology teachers are aware of student preferences among classroom teaching styles.

5. To measure what psychology teachers believe student preferences to be.

6. To compare students' and teachers' rankings of student preferences.

7. To make recommendations to increase compatibility between teaching styles and preferred learning styles.

8. After students have ranked their preferences, to determine the proportion of classroom time they would like to see devoted to each teaching style.

C. METHOD AND PROCEDURES

Teachers of psychology courses were asked to distribute questionnaires to their classes and to anticipate the responses they would receive as to the ranking of student preferences of five (5) teaching styles which were listed in alphabetical order.

Questionnaires were distributed in the classes of four psychology teachers teaching upper level courses, lower level courses and continuing education courses. Students were asked to rank their preferred learning style on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being assigned to their most preferred style and 5 assigned to their least preferred style. The five teaching styles which they were asked to rank were film, group discussion, lecture, teacher directed questions and answers, and videos.

Data were collected and tabulated for rankings of each teaching style. Frequencies and percentages were found for each ranking. Comparisons were made between preferred styles and teacher predictions.

Rankings were also obtained for percentages of classroom time to be devoted to each teaching style.

D. RESULTS

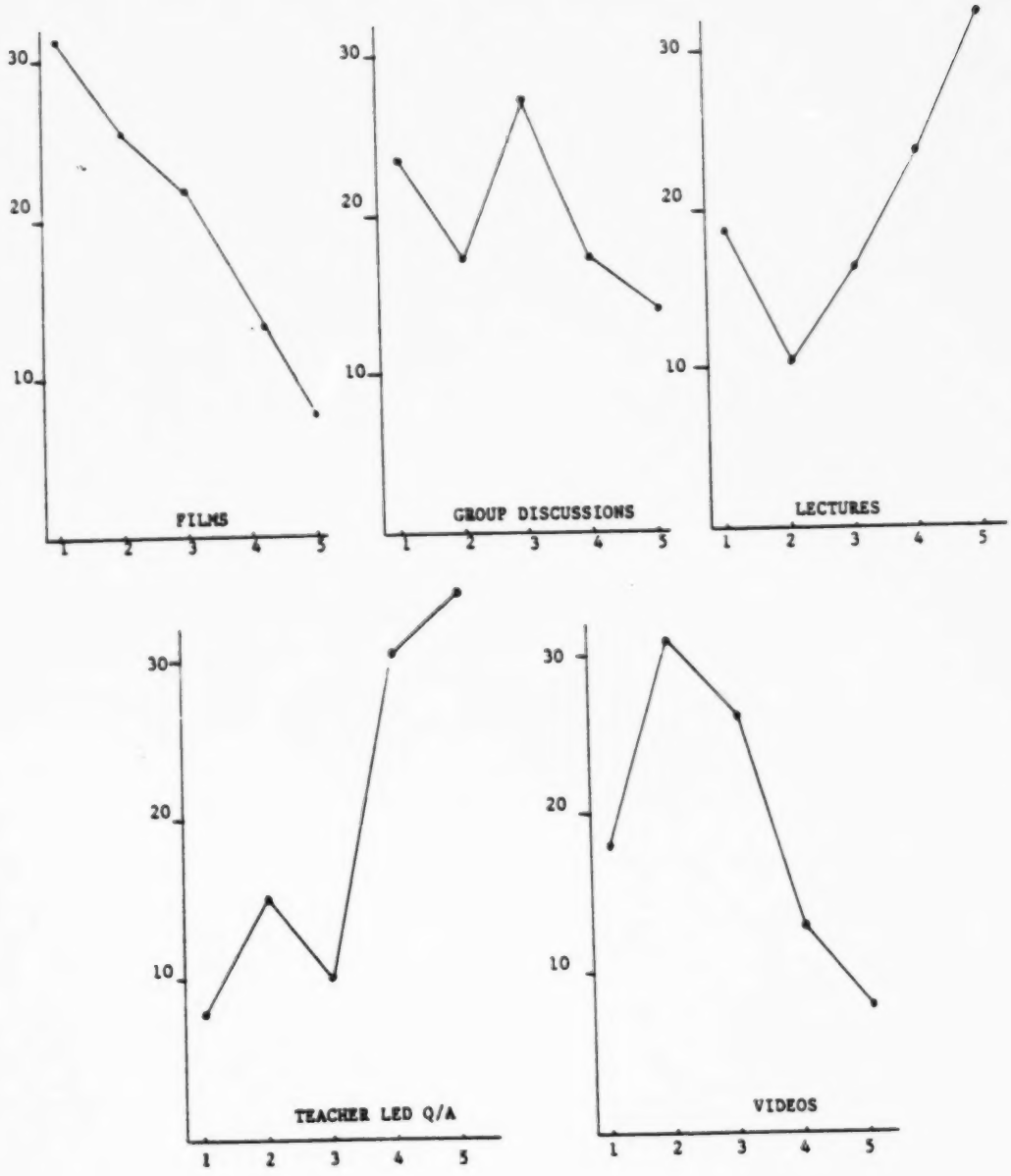
Four of thirteen teachers of psychology courses (including the investigator) distributed questionnaires to their classes. Useable data were obtained from two teachers and from 585 students. These data pertained to rankings of classroom teaching styles. Insufficient data were obtained related to percentages of time to be devoted to each teaching style per class.

Analysis of data indicated that films were ranked as first preference by 31% of the students; videos were second preference (31%); group discussions third (31%); teacher led questions and answers were ranked fourth (34%) and lectures ranked fifth (31%).

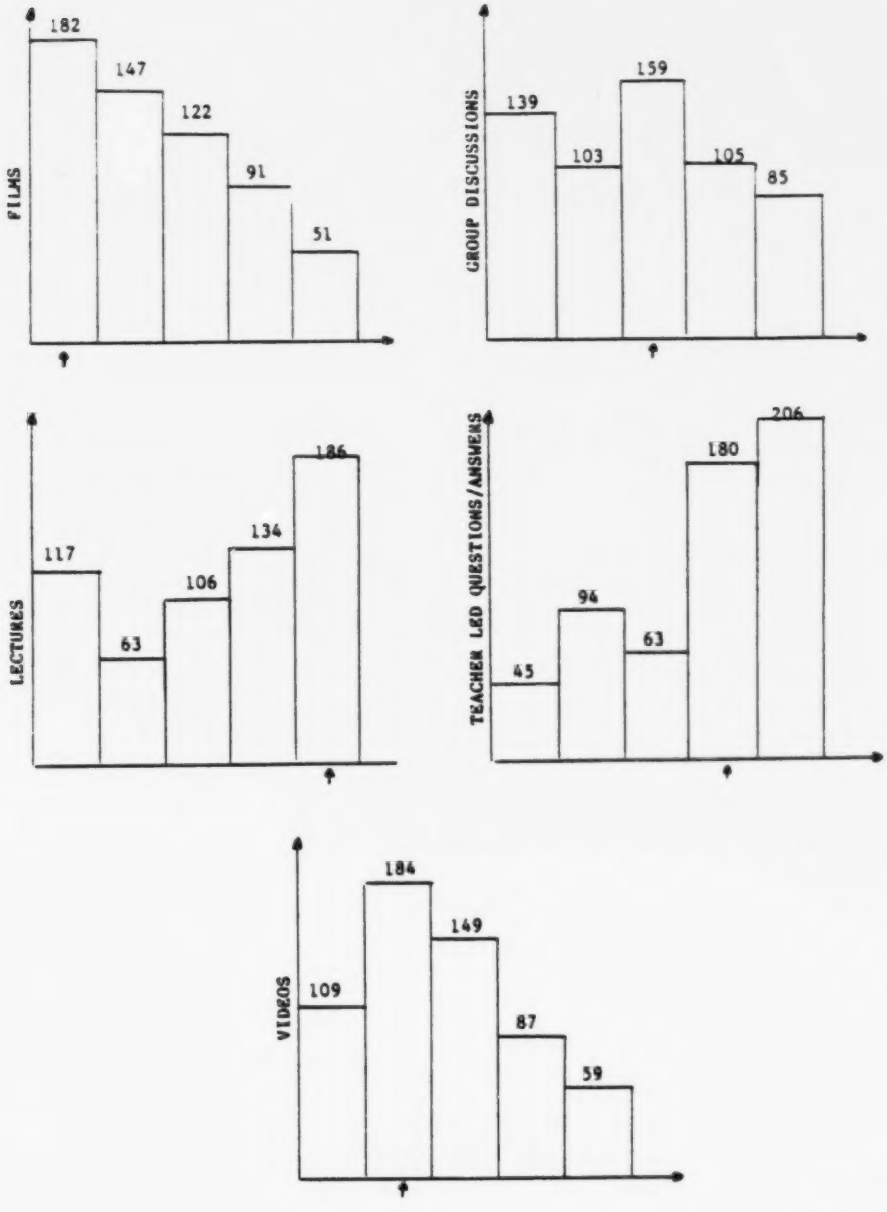
Teachers ranked student's preferences in the same order as reported above.

Please refer to attached histograms and polygons.

PERCENTAGES PER RANKING FOR
EACH STYLE



FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION
ACCORDING TO RANKING CHOICE



E. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

The results suggest that students have preferred learning styles. They ranked these preferred styles as follows: films, videos, group discussions, teacher led questions and answers, and lectures.

The instructors who predicted what the student rankings would be appeared to be aware of student preferences. It is quite possible that these instructors incorporate the preferred learning styles in their classroom strategies and that the student preferences in fact are reflections of the teacher's strategies.

The absence of participation or predictions by other instructors suggests the lack of awareness or lack of interest in preferred learning styles which may in turn influence teaching styles. Too few data were collected to draw conclusions as to whether or not teaching styles influence student's preferences or whether or not students in fact do have preferences.

F. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Too few data were collected from students or instructors for one to draw conclusions about preferred learning styles or teacher awareness of these preferred styles. The data collected appear to reflect the teaching styles in use. That is, those instructors who participated in this study frequently use films available to psychology instructors. Films were the first ranking preference expressed by their students.

It is quite possible that the findings would have been very different had more instructors participated.

It is recommended that this study be repeated following a brief orientation of teachers regarding the purpose of the study. Furthermore, while media use may be desirable, lack of sufficient funds and copyright restrictions may preclude increased use of films and videos. Therefore, it is recommended that a similar study be conducted following instructor orientation which would include other classroom teaching strategies such as: programmed instruction, peer teaching, projects, simulation, teaching games, and independent study.

G. BUDGET

Questionnaires - (typing, printing, materials)	$ 70.00
Student salary - (10 hours X $4.50)	45.00
Typist - (questionnaires - final report)	35.00
Total	$150.00

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